Castlemaine Naturalist

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Monthly newsletter of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Swift Parrot photo by Debbie Worland

Wednesday Wildflower Walk September 17, 2014

Leader Richard Piesse
Location: Muckleford rail crossing, Sinclairs lane
Species list by Noel Young (in flower unless otherwise stated) -

Waxlip orchid	*Glossodia major*
Dusky /Pink fingers	*Caladenia fuscata/ carnea*
Leopard Orchid	*Diuris pardina* (finished)
Fairy Wax-flower	*Philotheca verrucosa*
Common Rice-flower	*Pimelea humilis*
Billy button	*Craspedia variabilis*
Early Nancy	*Wurmbea dioica*
Common Beard-heath	*Leucopogon virgatus*
Gorse Bitter-pea	*Daviesia ulicifolia*
Red Parrot-pea	*Dillwynia hispida* * (one plant found)
Matted bush-pea	*Pultenaea pedunculata*
Pink Bells	*Tetratheca ciliata*
Downy Grevillea	*Grevillea alpina*
Yam Daisy	*Microseris* sp.
Gold-dust wattle	*Acacia acinacea*
Common Fringe-myrtle	*Calytrix tetragona*
Milkmaid	*Burchardia umbellata*
Yet to flower -	
Coffee- bush	*Cassinia arcuata*
Chocolate Lily	*Arthropodium strictum*
Scented? Sun Orchids	*Thelymitra megcalyptra*

* Right - the Red Parrot-pea photographed on the walk, with first flowers and many buds

Wednesday Wildflower Wander, Kalimna 24/9/14

Rita Mills

Denis led us to a most delightful spot in Kalimna on the Tourist Road, and we spent about an hour within about a 5 metre radius at my guess. The afternoon was mild, though showery, the group consisted of a wide range of ages from young children to mature (refuse to admit to 'old') adults, and the roadside was an absolute picture, with Downy Grevillea *G. alpina* in several shades from yellow to red, and Gorse Bitter-pea *Daviesia ulicifolia* dominating; the best I have seen it for many years.

The following is a combination of lists from Rita and Geraldine Harris [ed] -

Acacia acinacea	Gold-dust Wattle
Acacia aspera	Rough wattle
Acacia paradoxa	Hedge Wattle
Acrotriche serrulata	Honey-pots
Arthropodium strictum	Chocolate Lily
Brachyloma daphnoides	Daphne Heath
Bursaria spinosa	Sweet Bursaria
Caladenia carnea	Pink Fingers
Craspedia variabilis	Billy-buttons
Daviesia leptophylla	Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea
Daviesia ulicifolia	Gorse Bitter-pea
Diuris pardina	Leopard Orchid
Drosera auriculata	Tall Sundew
Glossodia major	Waxlip Orchid
Goodenia blackiana	Native Primrose
Grevillea alpina	Downy Grevillea
Hardenbergia violacea	Purple Coral-pea
Melichrus urceolatus	Urn Heath (photo above)
Microseris sp.	Yam Daisy
Millotia tenuifolia	Soft Millotia
Ozothamnus obcordatus	Grey Everlasting
Philotheca verrucosa	Fairy Wax-flower
Pimelea humilis	Common Rice Flower
Pimelea linifolia	Slender Rice-flower
Prostanthera denticulata	Rough Mint-bush
Rhytidosporum procumbens	White Marianth
Stackhousia monogyna	Creamy Candles
Tetratheca ciliata	Pink Bells
Wahlenbergia sp.	Bluebell
Wurmbea dioica	Early Nancy
Xerochrysum viscosum	Sticky Everlasting

COLOUR NEWSLETTER

Noel Young has been producing the newsletter for more years than I can remember. He has always struggled to find suitable articles, but somehow succeeded. In recent times he has received help from Barbara Guerin. On his own initiative he has decided to produce colour copies of the newsletter when he has the appropriate material.

I hope that this will encourage members to submit material – no matter how trivial – with photographic content suitable for incorporation into a colour edition. If this succeeds, we could well have a regular colour newsletter.
It is this sort of initiative which will allow the Club to prosper. Well done Noel!

Nigel Harland, President

Serendipity in the field

Damian Kelly

Having spent a lot of time roaming along the rivers and swamps about in the drier areas in northern Victoria has given me the opportunity to come across a variety of bird species that are often hard to see. The dry country across the north up as far as the Murray River can provide quite interesting birds even though the environment appears very dry and harsh. Spending time can reveal quite a range of unusual birds. Take Lake Tyrell near Sea Lake for example. At first glance it looks very dry and uninviting, but in fact there are some interesting birds to be seen. A beautiful small bird that is hard to see until you know its habits is the Rufous Fieldwren. It frequents scrubby areas of saltbush but is quite a sight to see sitting high on the top of small bushes as it surveys its domain.

Also quite easy to see is the Yellow-throated Miner. At first glance it may be confused with the more common Noisy Miner, but a closer look will reward you with good views of the Yellow-throated Miners in the trees near the lake. With changing habitats this bird can now only be found in isolated locations.

An altogether brighter family that frequents similar habitat are the Chats - White-fronted, Orange and Crimson. The White-fronted is quite common and likely to be easily seen around Castlemaine. The Orange Chat really stands out and can be seen in various places up north - a beautiful bird in an otherwise drab landscape. Alas, the Crimson Chat has so far proved to be my bogey bird in Victoria even though I have spent lots of time pursuing photos.

As luck would have it, the same day I saw the Orange Chats was a few days after a period of strong northerly winds - hot and drying, but these ill winds also brought down a prize from further inland - a flock of Australian Pratincoles. Hard to get close to in the open paddocks, but I still managed a few images.

Unfortunately the Bush Stone Curlew is now a rare bird over its previous habitat, but there are still a few places where they can be seen if you are lucky. One such place is up Rutherglen way, where a little patience can sometimes reveal good views of this cryptic bird. Not quite as easy to see as in the UK where the Stone Curlew site was signposted and came with a pleasant hide to add to the viewing experience. Quite different to finding them in northern Victoria.

Rufous Fieldwren, Lake Tyrell

Yellow-throated Miner, Lake Tyrell

Orange Chat near Kow Swamp, northern Victoria.

Australian Pratincole, on the plains south of Kow Swamp.
Stone Curlew, northern Victoria

October excursion

The October excursion is to Lushington Bushland Reserve in McKenzies Hill on Saturday 11th October. We'll be undertaking a survey of plants and birds in the reserve to help the McKenzies Hill Action & Landcare Group with their conservation efforts at the site. There will be survey sheets to fill in on the excursion and some resources to help ID difficult species. It would great to have some of the club's own experts along on the day to help those with less experience.

The reserves we'll visit have had a history of major disturbance so it will be interesting (and perhaps surprising) to find out what has survived from the original flora.

And most importantly, Lushington Reserve has a couple of very nice picnic tables for afternoon tea!

Meet at the Octopus at 1:30pm to carpool, or meet at Lushington Bushland Reserve at 1:45pm (Martin Street, opposite Pyrenees Quarries)

Max Schlachter

Observations

At the September meeting -

- Debbie Worland reported that Swift Parrots are still at the golf course, and that a fortnight ago (end of August) she had counted over 80 Castlemaine Spider Orchids *Caladenia clavescens* at the Monk, some in a new area downhill from the known occurrence on the track - Rita
- Observations on the Taradale group walk around the Eureka Reef circuit (Dingo Park road) Wednesday 10/9 : Nodding Greenhoods *Pterostylis nutans*, Pink Fingers *Caladenia sp.*, Rough, Golden and Gold-dust Wattles *Acacias aspera, pycnantha and acinacea*, Billy Buttons *Craspedia variabilis*, Fairy Wax *Philotheca verrucosa*, Purple Coral-pea *Hardenbergia violacea*, Handsome, or Hill, Flat-pea *Platylobium montanum* ssp *montanum*, Early Nancy *Wurmbea dioica*, a large area of Small Mosquito Orchids *Acianthus pusillus*, with a deep purple backed, ground hugging leaf. Unfortunately the flowers were finished on the one stem that we found. Also some Sticky Everlastings and Sun Orchids in bud. Birds heard or seen were: Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo (h), Eastern and Crimson Rosellas, Magpies, Red Wattlebirds, White-throated Tree-creeper (h), and a Pardalote – and plenty of LBJ's – I didn't take my binocs are we were supposed to be *walking*! - Rita
- At a quadrat down Green Gully road, in an area not burnt for some time, there was a very dense show of seedlings including Grevillea, Pink Bells, Wax-flower, lots of Hovea, and hillsides covered in 3 species of flowering Wattles - Richard Piesse

- Geraldine commented that there was an unusual abundance of Golden Moth orchids in her bush paddock, more than seen for many years, as well as masses of Early Nancys
- Penny Garnett said someone had told her of seeing an Eastern Shrike-tit in Castlemaine
- Natalie passed around a Nodding? Greenhood for a positive identification. She had inadvertantly weeded it out on her property
- Claire saw 6 pairs of Shining Bronze Cuckoos near the creek along Golden Point road
- Max, on closely inspecting a Hakea in the Botanical gardens, noticed a bee firmly impaled on one of the phylodes. Cause may have been a 'woops' on a windy day?
- **Later**
- 19/9 - Birds seen today - Swift Parrots still at the golf course [see cover photo] , I also found Little Eagle on nest and a Lathams Snipe on dam bank - Debbie Worland

Right - The last remaining flowers of the Castlemaine Spider Orchids *Caladenia clavescens* at the Monk on September 23 - Noel Young

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists
Coming events

Wed October 8 **Wildflower walk** Leader Rita Mills

Fri October 10 meeting: speaker TANYA LOOS - Daylesford nature diary

Sat October 11 field trip: Lushington Hill Reserve, leader Max Schlachter

November 1 Roadside Cleanup (date to be confirmed) 9am start

Fri November 14 meeting: speaker NIGEL HARLAND - India

Sat November 15 field trip: Pudding Bag Lane Reserve. Max & Chris

Sat December 6 **Annual Bird Count**

Fri December 12 meeting: **Members night**

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

General meetings - (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 7.30 pm.

Field Trips - (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the car park opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.

Business meetings - third Thursday of each month, except December, at George Broadways; 24a Greenhill Ave., at 6.00 pm. Members are invited to attend.

Club website - http://castlemainefnc.wordpress.com/

Subscriptions for 2014
Ordinary membership: Single $30, Family $40
Pensioner or student: Single $25, Family $30
Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

2014 Committee

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